LIVING FULL 'N FREE WITH RORIE

The Comprehensive Guide to Fasting Better

by Rorie Weisberg, INHC

Medically Endorsed by Dr. D. Zwickler, Endocrinologist

Halachically Endorsed by Rabbi D. Coren

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MODULE 1 • WELCOME

Introduction

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> *“I feel fine on fast days. I don’t know why everyone’s making such a big deal of it.”*
>
> IF THAT’S YOU, THIS GUIDE ISN’T FOR YOU

But for those who struggle with fasting, whether it’s during or after the fast, this guide is here to help you figure out why — and give you a game plan that will drastically improve your fasting experience.

WHY I WROTE THIS GUIDE

As you might have guessed, this topic, like many others I write about, is a personal one for me. For years, I struggled through fast days, sometimes eating shiurim of crackers and orange juice, other times plowing through without them, but always experiencing severe discomfort and health setbacks that lasted days or even weeks after. It took years of trial and error, research, and consultation with rabbanim to hit upon a game plan that allowed me to fast — and recover from fasting — with stamina and focus.

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It is my hope that this guide provides you with the clarity I wish I had years ago and allows you to experience meaningful fast days ahead feeling healthy and strong.

WHAT'S INSIDE

1. **Why Fasting Is Hard For You** — hydration, blood sugar, digestion, and sleep
2. **Fasting with Shiurim** — who qualifies, and how to do it right
3. **Going Into the Days After the Fast** — recovering with simchah, not just survival

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

Anyone with a medical problem, especially diabetes, who would like to follow any part of the guidelines in this guide must check with their individual doctor first.

MODULE 2 • WHY FASTING IS HARD FOR YOU • LESSON 1

Hydration

The number-one reason people have a hard time fasting? We aren't hydrated enough. And it's not just about drinking more.

1. ## Drink enough

   Aim to drink 8–10 cups of water per day. Not there yet? Start now!

   If you drink coffee, which is dehydrating, add one extra cup of water for every cup of coffee you drink.

2 Incorporate the minerals your body needs

It’s not just water your body needs — it’s the minerals that help absorb it on a cellular level. Those minerals are called **electrolytes**, and the best way to boost them is with whole-food sources.

SODIUM

Holds onto water, prevents dehydration

Mineral salts, celery, Swiss chard, beets, seaweed, olives, miso

CHLORIDE

Fluid balance, stomach acid production

Mineral salts, tomatoes, celery, seaweed, olives, eggs

POTASSIUM

Prevents cramping and fatigue

Avocados, sweet & white potatoes, spinach, coconut water, apricots, beans, lentils, bananas

MAGNESIUM

Energy, stress response, steady blood sugar

Pumpkin seeds, almonds, cashews, chia, spinach, avocados, black beans, quinoa, dark chocolate

3 Add a magnesium supplement

Today’s magnesium-deficient soil means food alone can’t give us the full amount we need. Everyone — especially those who are chronically dehydrated — should take a daily magnesium supplement.

Q. What form of magnesium should I take?

A. Magnesium glycinate — it’s highly absorbent, gentle on the stomach, calming, and ideal for long-term use. My preferred brand is Trace Minerals Mega Mag, a liquid blend of magnesium glycinate and chloride.

Q. What’s my ideal daily dose?

A. General guideline: 200–400 mg/day in pill form, or 2–4 mL/day (40–80 drops) in liquid form. Build up slowly — start with 10 drops for 2 days, add 5 more every few days. Your body will tell you when you’ve exceeded your dose with loose bowels; back off from there. Most women land around 60–80 drops/day, most men 70–80.

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Note: Epsom salt baths and magnesium cream or sprays are effective ways to absorb additional magnesium through the skin.

STEP 4 · RECIPE

Rorie’s Electrolyte Drink

Helps your body load up on, absorb, and store electrolytes fast — drink before the fast to enter fully hydrated, and after to replenish quickly.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup fresh-squeezed orange juice
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 tbsp raw honey
- ⅛ tsp mineral salt
- 2–3 cups filtered water, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Mix and enjoy! Drink at least one batch the day the fast begins (optionally the day before too), and again in the days following to rehydrate.

BIG-BATCH CONCENTRATE

Mix in a large jar: 6 Tbsp raw honey (dissolved in ½ cup hot water), ¾ tsp pink salt, 1½ cups fresh lemon juice, 3 cups fresh orange juice.

Then choose one: **refrigerate** as-is and dilute with 10–12 cups cold water when serving · **dilute right away** and refrigerate up to 4 days · or **freeze** whole or in 6 portions, defrosting each with 2–3 cups cold water.

Safe for kids — and it can help ease a newly-minted teenage faster’s pre-fast anxiety, too.

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A NOTE ON CAFFEINE WITHDRAWAL

Many people experience intense caffeine withdrawal during a fast, causing headaches separate from dehydration. Lower caffeine in the days leading up to the fast to ease the reaction. Staying hydrated and keeping blood sugar steady beforehand also helps. In more severe cases, slow-release caffeine pills or patches before the fast can offer relief.

Blood Sugar Balance

When we think of “blood sugar challenges,” we tend to think of diagnosed imbalances, such as diabetes or hypoglycemia. But on a fast day, *everyone* — including those whose blood sugar is generally stable — will feel the drop.

The good news? It’s up to you to decide how intense that drop will be — and how gentle the climb will be on the way back up again.

> *While many people with blood sugar challenges can go safely without food for a day, many — especially those with hypoglycemia or diabetes — cannot. Consult with a Rav who can take the time to get a full grasp of your medical situation and provide the individual psak you need. See Module 3 for guidance on fasting via shiurim.*

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1 Preparation: Balance your blood sugar

In the days leading up to the fast, hydration is your first priority — and meals that balance your blood sugar are a very close second. Standalone carbs (even healthy ones) spike blood sugar. Eaten alongside protein and healthy fats, they're cushioned instead. I call this a **Macro Meal**.

Takeaway: For at least 3 days before the fast, only eat carbs in the context of Macro Meals.

If you lean toward blood sugar spikes after eating, or have a diagnosed high blood sugar or insulin-related issue, you may do better minimizing carbs and leaning into protein, fats, and low-glycemic fiber. Continue any blood sugar medication as prescribed, and consult your healthcare practitioner for 1:1 guidance.

2 Post-fast: Bring your blood sugar back to baseline, your way

People generally lean toward **low** or **high** blood sugar tendencies. Knowing yours helps you break your fast the right way.

LOW BLOOD SUGAR SIGNS

- Shaky, nauseous, or lightheaded when you go too long without eating
- Needing to eat more frequently from real hunger, not cravings
- Anxious, jittery, or trouble concentrating if a meal is delayed

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR SIGNS

- Fatigue or drowsiness after meals, especially higher-carb ones
- Brain fog, sluggishness, or increased thirst
- Sugar/carb cravings or excessive hunger shortly after eating

Hypoglycemia is clinically defined as blood glucose below 70 mg/dL — but many people experience reactive low blood sugar symptoms even if their levels don't dip that far. Persistent high-blood-sugar patterns may be early signs of metabolic dysregulation, which can precede or accompany insulin resistance, prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, or PCOS.

FOR EVERYONE: HOW TO BREAK THE FAST

1. Break your fast on water with lemon and a pinch of salt and/or magnesium (or Rorie's Electrolyte Drink, if you don't lean toward high blood sugar).

2. Then eat foods that will balance your blood sugar — the specifics depend on your type.

REGULAR-TO-LOW BLOOD SUGAR

Have a Macro Meal. You need carbs to get back to baseline — but not processed carbs alone (skip the post-fast bagel). Balance complex carbs with healthy fats, vegetables, and extra protein to ease your blood sugar back gently.

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR TENDENCY

Don't start with a carb. Go straight for protein, fats, and veggies — eggs, fish, avocado, veggie soup, salad. If tolerated, add a low-glycemic carb later (quinoa, sweet potato) to stabilize first, then ease in energy.

THE DAYS AFTER: BACK TO BASELINE

Feeling hungrier, shakier, or having intense sugar cravings are all normal post-fast symptoms. Instead of riding the roller coaster, seek the true balance your body is looking for.

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REGULAR-TO-LOW

Macro Meals or snacks every 3–4 hours. When a snack includes a complex carb, “wrap it” with fats, protein, and fiber. Honor hunger cues — add a full meal rather than a light snack if your body needs it.

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

Start the day with a high-protein, high-fiber, savory-leaning breakfast. Keep meals high-protein and high-fiber all day. Add an extra high-protein meal if cravings or hunger spike.

Digestive Challenges

> *“As someone who has navigated digestive challenges for years, fasting was once such a setback that I would only feel fully recovered from Yom Kippur by Simchas Torah.”*
>
> — RORIE

Preparing your digestive system to take on a fast takes nuance and discipline. But the difference in how you feel both on and after the fast makes it entirely worth it.

1 Eat only to the point of comfortable satisfaction

As the Rambam teaches, overeating is one of the worst things a person can do to their digestive system — worse than eating unhealthy food. Overeating before a fast stretches the stomach, burdens digestion, and often leads to stronger hunger pangs the next day. Instead, eat moderate, balanced meals that stabilize blood sugar, and use time between meals to hydrate rather than drinking with meals.

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2 Eat what you know works for you

For 2–3 days before the fast, you're preparing your body for a marathon. If you have known digestive issues, stick to the protocol you know works. If you're not sure which foods serve you best, seek 1:1 guidance.

3 After the fast, ease in as gently as possible

After not eating for up to 25 hours, your system needs utmost gentleness to begin digesting again.

Q. What should I eat after the fast?

A. Break your fast on water (ideally with Mega Mag drops, a pinch of salt, and lemon) or, if well tolerated, Rorie's Electrolyte Drink. Then eat a small meal — leaner proteins, lower-fiber fats, and softer cooked vegetables and complex carbs (root vegetables, pseudograins, rice, oats) are gentlest. A serving of olive oil helps stabilize blood sugar while being digestion-friendly.

Note: For those with GERD or sensitivity to high-acid beverages, Rorie's Electrolyte Drink may be harder on the system immediately post-fast. Add more honey to reduce acidity, or wait until the following day.

Remember, your eyes are bigger than your stomach. After a small meal, pause for half an hour or more, then eat another mini-meal if you're still hungry. Stabilize hunger and blood sugar without overtaxing a digestive system that's been offline much longer than usual.

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4

Give yourself time

For 2–3 days after the fast, stick to gentle complex carbs, well-cooked vegetables, and light proteins and fats. Eat smaller, more frequent meals. When your body feels ready, begin re-incorporating fruits, raw vegetables, and your normal variety of proteins.

A NOTE ON POST-FAST STRESS

When the body enters fight-or-flight, digestion naturally slows down. Even though we know we're fasting for halachic reasons, the body perceives the lack of food as a stressor — raising cortisol and insulin, and slowing digestion further. The more we signal safety to the body, the faster we shift into the parasympathetic "rest and digest" state.

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE SHIFT

- Gentle breathing exercises
- Taking a warm bath
- Guided meditations
- Spending time outside, grounding

MODULE 2 • WHY FASTING IS HARD FOR YOU • LESSON 4

Fasting & Sleep Stress

This isn't just true for those who struggle with fasting. It's true for everyone: it's harder to sleep the night after a fast.

Fasting is a stress on the metabolic and digestive system — and on the entire body. It induces higher secretion of cortisol, the body's stress hormone, which interferes with the production of melatonin, the body's sleep hormone.

ON THE FAST

1. **Get 5 minutes of outdoor time within 30 minutes of waking**

   Being outdoors reduces cortisol. Walking to shul, davening outside, or resting on a deck chair all help your body combat stress.

2. **Avoid excessive napping**

   Sleeping through the night will do more for you than napping on the fast itself. If you nap, have someone wake you after 20–30 minutes. Rest near a window with sunlight to support your circadian rhythm.

3. **Practice stress-reducing breath work**

   Box breathing, tapping, and other vagus nerve exercises can support the adrenals and reduce the stress of fasting on the body.

AFTER THE FAST

Stay (or go) screen-free. From the moment the fast ends until bedtime, stay off screens — screen time interferes with sleep quality.

Take an Epsom salt bath and/or apply magnesium cream. Both boost magnesium levels, relax achy muscles, and promote better sleep.

Drink between meals. Rehydrating with magnesium glycinate and Rorie’s Electrolyte Drink helps reduce cortisol faster.

Consider waiting on caffeine. It can negatively impact sleep and rehydration — waiting until the next day helps you sleep better.

Don’t panic. If sleep still doesn’t come, know it’s normal. Your body’s been through a lot, but the problem won’t last.

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If you are more tired the day after the fast, go easy on yourself. That, together with balanced nutrition according to your needs, will help ease your body out of stress mode so you can get back to routine.

MODULE 2 • WHY FASTING IS HARD FOR YOU • LESSON 5

Summary: Fasting Tips at a Glance

BEFORE THE FAST

Hydrate well for a few days leading up to the fast — food-sourced electrolytes plus Rorie's Electrolyte Drink.

Eat macro-balanced meals with protein, healthy fats, fiber, and complex carbs (if they work for you):

- Low blood sugar: complex carbs within well-balanced Macro Meals & snacks
- High blood sugar: lower glycemic load, more protein/fat/fiber

Avoid overeating and choose foods that digest well for your body.

AFTER THE FAST

Rehydrate with electrolytes and magnesium.

Break the fast gently — reach for light, easy-to-digest foods that help bring your blood sugar back to balance.

Ease into the day after by continuing to hydrate and choosing macro-balanced meals with plenty of protein, following the blood sugar- and digestion-friendly guidelines that work for you.

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A NOTE FOR BOTH DIGESTIVE & BLOOD SUGAR CHALLENGES

Those who have both digestive and blood sugar challenges may require guidance beyond the scope of this guide. Please seek 1:1 guidance from a competent practitioner.

MODULE 3 • FASTING WITH SHIURIM • LESSON 1

Who Should Ask a Shailah?

Written with the halachic collaboration of Rabbi Doniel Coren

Many people hesitate before asking shailos around fasting, assuming that fasts are meant to make them suffer, or that their fast will be worth "less" if they don't make a heavy sacrifice for it.

This guide is here to encourage you to ask.

The Torah is a *Toras chaim*, a Torah of life. And the mitzvos are given to us so that "vachai bahem" — we can *live* through them — not in suffering, but in joy.

> *If a person's health prevents them from fulfilling a mitzvah l'chatchilah,* ***b'dieved becomes their l'chatchilah****. It's their ideal. It's their avodah: their absolute best way to serve Hashem.*

If fasting presents a challenge to you — whether for physical or mental health reasons, whether during or after the fast — the best thing you can do is consult with a Rav who will take the time to listen, question, and fully understand your situation before providing the individual psak you need.

REACH OUT TO A RAV IF YOU…

- [ ] Are recovering from surgery
- [ ] Have a chronic illness
- [ ] Are undergoing medical treatments
- [ ] Experience blood-sugar-related issues
- [ ] Have hypoglycemia
- [ ] Have diabetes, pre-diabetes, or insulin resistance
- [ ] Experience digestive issues or symptoms that can flare up or relapse
- [ ] Experience anxiety or panic attacks
- [ ] Struggle or have struggled with an eating disorder
- [ ] Are significantly underweight or otherwise physically weakened
- [ ] Are pregnant (especially if experiencing complications)
- [ ] Are postpartum
- [ ] Are nursing

Consulting your Rav together with your healthcare practitioner, who can clearly present the full scope of your situation, can be extremely helpful in receiving the appropriate psak.

Whatever psak your Rav gives you based on your health situation — whether it is to fast the standard way, to fast using shiurim, or not to fast at all — **that becomes your ultimate mode of serving Hashem this fast day**, and it's a mitzvah you can do with full simchah.

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When “Shiurim” May Apply

Fasting using “shiurim” means consuming very small amounts of food and drink — a 1-oz shot cup’s worth — at an interval of 9 minutes apart.

> *Depending on your situation, shorter intervals may be permitted. You may also be instructed to have your food and drink shiurim together, keep them separate, or have only liquids throughout the day. Consult your Rav for individual guidance.*

The purpose of eating and drinking shiurim is to enable people who cannot fast in the standard way to fast. Because according to halacha, **eating and drinking in this way is considered fasting.**

SHIURIM, BY FAST DAY

Yom Kippur	Shiurim is most typically used here, since fasting is d’oraysa (Torah-level).
Tisha B’Av	Most poskim rule that people in weakened states should either fast for part of the day or not fast at all, depending on their situation. In some cases, shiurim may be recommended by a Rav.
Minor Fasts Shivah Asar B’Tamuz, Asarah B’Teves, Tzom Gedalyah	It is common for people in weakened states to receive a psak to not fast at all.

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If you receive a psak to fast using shiurim, know that this is **not** considered “not fasting.” Rather, it is the way of fasting that will enable you not to break your fast.

People who use shiurim correctly typically get through the fast feeling stable and healthy, without the need to “crash” and gulp down a big cup of orange juice or hook up an IV at midday — meaning that instead of breaking their fast, they can actually fast l’fi halacha all the way through.

> Once again, if a Rav decides that you should fast using shiurim, this mode of fasting becomes **your l’chatchilah**. Embrace it knowing you are doing the best thing you can do!

MODULE 3 • FASTING WITH SHIURIM • LESSON 3

Why Shiurim Often Don’t Feel Good

Typically, people associate “doing shiurim” with eating dry, processed carbs, such as crackers or Cheerios, and drinking coffee or orange juice.

For those with digestive or blood sugar challenges, eating these foods all through the day does little to promote feeling good; on a hormonal level, it can actually cause them to feel worse.

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Processed carbs & sugary drinks, all day

↓

Blood sugar spike-and-drop roller coaster

↓

Insulin pumping, cortisol levels climb

↓

Dizzy, shaky, and weak — not the results we're looking for

Thankfully, there's a better way.

See the next lesson for how to build your shiurim around balanced nutrition instead.

MODULE 3 • FASTING WITH SHIURIM • LESSON 4

How to Properly Use Shiurim

WHEN TO START

Discuss with your Rav whether it's necessary to wait until the morning of Yom Kippur to begin your shiurim; it is likely that you're allowed to begin at night. For individuals with blood sugar issues or other health concerns, starting shiurim right away on the night of Yom Kippur is advised — not necessarily every 9 minutes yet, but as needed. Consult with your Rav.

It is **not** preferable to "hold off" on shiurim until you feel desperate. Shiurim are in place to enable you to fast in a stable way all the way through — stay ahead of yourself by starting right away. If you can't eat first thing in the morning, begin drinking immediately, then start with food as soon as you can.

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WHAT SHOULD I DRINK?

1. **Start with water.** For the first hour after waking, fill your drinking shiurim with water — not coffee, and not even the electrolyte drink. After that, you can intersperse coffee (think 2 shiurim of coffee, then 1 of water). Don't overdo the coffee, as it will dehydrate you.

2. **Incorporate electrolyte drink.** Every hour or so, use it for 1–3 of your drinking shiurim. The rest should be water.

3. **Remember magnesium** (if you've been taking it). Add your drops to your water.

WHAT SHOULD I EAT?

In one word: Fuel.

It's all about making little bites count — and being nice to your blood sugar, by giving your body a balanced mix of macronutrients throughout the day. Mix and match these three approaches:

METHOD 1 · MACRO-BLEND FOODS

Choose shiurim-foods that contain a mix of macronutrients. A shot cup of nuts gives you complex carbs, healthy fats, fiber, and protein. Balanced baked goods (like Banana Nut Muffins or Oatmeal Sunbutter Squares) work the same way — an ounce of each goes a long way.

METHOD 2 · ALTERNATE BY MACRONUTRIENT

Give your body a balanced day by rotating: a complex carb one shiur (grapes, banana, quinoa), then protein the next (half a hard-boiled egg, chicken, turkey), then healthy fats (avocado, olives).

If digestion is more of a concern, start with light complex carbs, then alternate protein and fats. If blood sugar is the issue, lead with protein and favor more protein shots over carbs.

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METHOD 3 · BALANCED PLATE, OUNCE BY OUNCE

Prepare a familiar, balanced meal (chicken, quinoa, steamed veggies in small cubes) and take a 1-oz scoop from a different part of the plate at each interval. Clients report feeling not just physically even, but emotionally better about eating all day.

A note on runnier foods: it's halachically controversial whether liquid-like foods (yogurt, applesauce, smoothies) count as food or drink. In most cases, a Rav will advise eating these as a standalone 1-oz shiur, taking the place of both. From a health standpoint, it's best to save these for later in the day, once your body has already been nourished and hydrated.

WHEN CAN I TAKE A BREAK?

Don't skip shiurim at the beginning of the day. Later on, once your body has gotten solid nutrition and hydration, a small break (up to 30 minutes) to daven, rest, or read with your kids is fine. Listen to your body: if it signals for food or drink beyond the first 9 minutes of your "break," stop and continue with your next shiur.

If you feel quite full later in the day and don't need food, it's okay to have only a liquid shiur at a time. This doesn't make your fast "better" — it's just about what feels good for you.

When done correctly, shiurim become a safe, supported way to fast when standard fasting isn't a healthy option — ending the day hungry in a normal, healthy way, ready to break your fast on a balanced meal.

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MODULE 4 • CLOSING

Going Into the Days After the Fast

The days that follow our most significant fasts are days of *simchah* and *nechamah*. Yom Kippur flows into Sukkos, from tefillah and teshuvah to the joy of closeness. Tisha B’Av is followed by Shabbos Nachamu, from the ashes of churban to the promise of comfort.

For me, learning how to fast in a way that supports my body didn’t just make the fast itself more manageable. It changed what came after.

> *Instead of spending those days recovering — physically drained, foggy, and disconnected — I could live them. I could show up for the gifts built into these times.*

The fact that I can write this guide is a testament to both years of trial and error and the lived experiences of both myself and numerous clients. It is also my way of giving back and expressing gratitude to Hashem.

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If you've made it to the end of this guide — thank you for being here. May the wealth of information in these pages help gift you with a truly changed experience, enabling you to not only fast more easily but to enter the special times ahead as a vibrant receptacle of the full extent of simchah and nechama Hashem has in store.

Wishing you and yours a meaningful fast.

Sincerely,
Rorie

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